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ABSTRACT

Individuals, organizations, and American Indian tribes are rapidly recognizing the value of libraries. They are recognizing that libraries and the information services which they offer are necessary to meet Indian goals. Specific sensitivity to Indian ways and alternatives is just developing as library and information services develop in Indian communities. A series of 11 guides have been developed to provide initial direction and alternatives to those planning or engaged in developing Indian library and information systems. This guide, 7th in the series, identifies and briefly describes library service components which have demonstrated potential for meeting Indian informational needs. Among these components are: the library hours, circulation policy, library rules, reference services, story hours, and educational programs. Two types of services are discussed: (1) those which take place in the library and (2) those which take place outside the library. (NQ)

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by

Charles T Townley

Guide Number 88 June 1975

PREFACE

Libraries and information centers are rapidly becoming an integral part of Indian life. Individuals, organizations, and tribes have come to the decision that libraries and the information services that they offer are necessary to meet Indian goals. These goals may vary widely, from improved access to education, cultural information, information on available social services, to leisure reading. They are all based in a component or institution designed to process information - a library.

As yet, only limited resources are available to meet this fast growing demand. Funding must usually be garnered from other programs. Professionally qualified Indian librarians and trained Indian technicians are in critically short supply. Books and other informational resources still contain racist information. Experience in developing programs and services which meet the local community's needs is slight. Specific sensitivity to Indian ways and alternatives is just developing as library and information services develop in Indian communities.

The purpose of these guides is to provide initial direction and provide alternatives to those planning or engaged in developing Indian library and information systems. Each guide discusses basic policies, initial steps, or discreet activities that appear to be essential to successful Indian library service. Each guide gives the reader basic direction and alternatives for development in his locale.

The reader is strongly advised to recognize these guides for what they are - ideas and programs that have been successful in the communities where they are used. They will not solve all the problems of Indian library service. They will provide the reader with some ideas, programs, and concepts to be considered in light of informational needs in the specific Indian community to be served.

Three basic types of information are presented in the guides: societal coping skills, basic considerations for implementation; and descriptions of services unique or critical to Indian libraries. These guides are supplemented by the Appalachian Adult Education Center's, Library Service Guides. The excellent Appalachian guides deal primarily with services in small communities.

Coping skills are given in two guides, (#'s 1 and 2). Organization and implementation will be discussed in five of the guides (#0,3,9,10, & 11) which cover: funding, organization, assessing needs, materials selection, and training. Five guides will discuss services unique or critical to Indian Library Service (#4,5,6,7, & 8). These guides cover: cataloging, urban services, adult education, program elements, and information services.

Charles Townley, Editor

Promoting Indian Library Use

Charles Townley

Guide 7

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The project presented or reported herein was performed pursuant to a Grant from the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred.

I. DEFINITIONS

An old definition says that a library is the storehouse of man's recorded knowledge. As such, it was seen (and usually built) as a monument to man's self-esteem. For many years this same attitude has been reflected in the services, or more properly the lack of services, that libraries offered. Library services were designed primarily for the educated and well-to-do. Access to libraries was restricted by inconvenient hours as well as petty rules and regulations. Services offered inside the library were usually limited to answering simple reference questions and checking out books. Services outside the library were non-existent. If a school had a library, it did not contribute to the school's goals, but was an appendage used for study hall. In short, the library did little for the community except to serve as a monument or a place to dump students during a study hall. Thankfully, this attitude is disappearing.

Libraries now attempt to meet the total information needs of the community they serve. In a school, the library works in cooperation with the curriculum and staff to provide information and materials for students and faculty when and where they need them. A public library serves as a people's university, identifying and meeting informational needs of all the community in a manner and method convenient for the community. From a monumental warehouse, the library has emerged as a vital, vibrant social agency. Indian library service will be able to avoid the monument stage of library development if it resolutely develops programs and services that meet the broad informational needs of Indian people in a way that compliments Indian society.

It is the purpose of this guide to identify and briefly describe library service components that have demonstrated potential for meeting Indian informational needs. Two types of services will be discussed: those which take place in the library and those which take place outside the library. All these components have been used with success in Indian libraries. Not all libraries will want to implement all these components. The intent is to present a long buffet of ideas, from which one may pick the items most useful in the local community.

II. SERVICE COMPONENTS IN THE LIBRARY

Hours

A library does no one any good if it is closed at the time that people can use it. It is crucial that library services be available when sizable segments of the community can use them. A school library should be available not only for assigned use during class periods, but also for free access both before and after school and during the lunch hour. If students are bussed, the library should be open from the time the first bus arrives until the last bus leaves. If the students are not bussed, the

school library should be available for significant periods before and after school. If at all possible, access and transportation, if necessary, should be available at least one evening a week and/or weekends. Indian school libraries in New York, Wyoming, and the Dakotas have found this practice well received by students and successful as a method of assisting students overcome the lack of study facilities in the home.

Public and community libraries also find evening and/or weekend hours to be popular. Many times the wage earner requires the car during the day and access is possible only in the evening. Often adult education and community activities are held in the same building that houses the library. Persons attending these events will use the library if it is open. Indian libraries in New York and Wisconsin report their heaviest use during evening and weekend hours.

Three words of advice on hours are in order. (1) To keep a library open requires staff. Therefore, prospective staff members should be able to work evenings and weekends. This should be made clear during the selection process. (2) Flexibility is a key in setting library hours in an Indian community. There is no sense in having weekend hours in the summer, if the local community is heavily committed to the pow-wow or rodeo circuits. (3) Set library hours and staff schedules so that maximum staff are available during periods of maximum use.

Circulation Policy

The structure of Indian society is such that Anglo-oriented circulation policies must be revised to fit Indian lifestyles. A one month circulation period is useful in a dispersed area where people rarely get to town or like to pass materials among themselves. Fines and overdue notices have little effect as a deterrent because they are foreign to most Indian value systems. Also mail service is sporadic and few people have any money. On the other hand, the use of community pressure through a personal request, working off a lost book, and the posting or publishing of peoples names who have overdue materials have been most effective. The cardinal rule to remember is to keep materials and information flowing and not set up arbitrary and petty rules which restrict that flow.

Library Rules

Like circulation policy, library rules must be revised to meet the standards of Indian society. Oral communication is a big part of Indian life. Consequently, quiet libraries may not be preferable in Indian communities. Due to the communal nature of Indian society, open space, group settings and meeting rooms are more useful than the individual study carrel and highly divided areas. Smoking bans and other rules of Anglo etiquette also deter people from using library resources. Indian people feel most comfortable in surroundings that reflect their value system and do not force them to make concessions to white man's

culture. The fewer the formal rules, the more likely the library will be accepted as an integral part of the community.

Reference Services

Because library service is new to Indian people and because Indian people are reluctant to ask questions of strangers, the demand for reference service will be low at first. It will be necessary for the staff to make the acquaintance of people, show an interest in them as individuals, and provide basic information on the services that the library offers. Politeness, tact and perseverance will result in a freedom to communicate. Once communication is established, questions will abound. Libraries serving Indian communities are likely to be asked at least four broad types of reference questions.

Normal reference questions are typical of those received in any library. They run the gamut from the short answer to readers advisory service. They can be answered by use of standard reference tools, interlibrary loan, and use of the telephone.

Student services again are typical of those found elsewhere. Indian students are no different than others in waiting until the last moment to do their assignments and requesting immediate and complete answers. One method of anticipating part of this demand is to request that teachers provide a list of research assignments each semester. Materials for those assignments may then be obtained well ahead of time.

Survival information is unique in its structure in Indian communities due to the special relationship that exists with the federal government. The library can provide a real service to the community if it becomes the information center and clearinghouse for the many social, legal, and health services provided by state, federal, local, and tribal governments and private organizations. Community members will appreciate the opportunity to go to one source for complete information. The provision of other survival information such as methods in preparing commodities or auto repairs are also in high demand. Much of this information must be gathered locally and supplemented with published information in order to be effective. Some methods of disseminating this information have been to publish guides and to notify the community that the library can provide this information on a continuing basis. The library should make a significant commitment for this is an area of exceedingly high interest.

Cultural information is another of high local interest. The library will be expected to have a complete set of recorded information on local residents and be able to answer all sorts and conditions of questions from it. In addition to this basic service the library should develop reference capacities based on locally created oral records. It is recommended that the librarian develop a subject arranged card file of oral sources and local cultural experts to meet this need.

Story Hours

Childrens story hours have been successful in most Indian school and community libraries where they have been used. In this situation, the librarian tells stories using a book or other device for illustrative material. Films and filmstrips are also useful. It is important to keep the stories short and interesting for a child's attention span is short. Story hours can be on any subject, but animal and Indian stories have the highest appeal. Tribal elders, if willing, add to the telling of Indian stories. Story hours are effective in both school and community library situations and are especially effective in Head-Start. In community libraries, story hours can be made more effective by scheduling them to be at the same time as cultural or consumer education classes for their parents. In all cases, story hours should be announced ahead of time and held at a specific time each week.

Puppet Theatres

Puppet theatres can be used as a tool to assist children develop a positive self-image and encourage group processes. Often the librarian can develop a group project to involve a range of children. Secondary students can prepare scripts and characters. Intermediate or primary students can operate the puppets and stage the show. Primary and pre-school students are good audiences. This type of activity has been very successful as an attention builder, because the students become involved in the library and begin to use it. It can be used in story hours, classes, and for parents. It is, however, very taxing on staff time and must be kept within reasonable bounds.

School Library Periods

Regularly scheduled library periods are effective in developing student use. Each classroom should be in the library for at least one hour a week. This can be broken into two, thirty minute periods. During this time the class should have some free time to select or read materials as well as a structured presentation, such as a story period or access to materials on a current classroom assignment. The librarian should be present throughout this period to answer questions or find information. If the local school has no organized library, the community library can arrange to provide a similar service if it is located near the school.

Reading and Summer Programs

The school or community library should consider the opportunity to promote reading among youth. Additional reading and phonics instruction may be provided through the library if the school's program is deficient. In the summer the library is often the sole educational institution available to young people. The library should carefully plan programs of reading, film, and cultural education to encourage the childrens intellectual devel-

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opment during the summer. Programs will vary from community to community according to the local need. Reading programs can be based on Reading is Fundamental or summer reading clubs. Arts and crafts, film nights and cultural programs have been used successfully in many Indian libraries.

Media Programs and Speakers

A library is both a cultural and an educational agency. As such, it has a responsibility to provide information in the form of regularly scheduled community programs. Educational and recreational films have been popular with both adults and children, particularly in more remote communities. After showing a film, the librarian should point out or make available related information in the library. Speakers should normally speak to a local concern, for example welfare rights, auto repair, or grazing policies. By videotaping or tape recording the presentation, the librarian can make this information available for those in the community who might not be able to attend. Again the librarian should point out and make available related information from the library. As a public relations tool, films and speakers can help introduce the Indian community to services available at the library.

Educational Programs

Libraries are often called people's universities. Indian libraries have developed some very useful educational services for the communities that they serve. Some of these are:

Right to Read - this federally funded program provides basic literacy training for people over the age of 16. It has a very flexible program and has been implemented very effectively in several Indian communities. Libraries are both eligible and logical institutions to conduct these programs.

GED - is a standardized exam whereby adults may obtain a high school diploma. Several Indian libraries have established effective programs to prepare or tutor people for these exams. Normally the library staff will coordinate the efforts of tutors, usually volunteers recruited from a nearby college, set up schedules, and provide space, back up materials and assistance.

College courses - are offered in some Indian libraries. Nearby colleges often offer, or would like to offer, college-level courses in Indian communities. The library is a very logical place to do this because it can offer space, materials, and the librarian can assist students in their studies. Some colleges are even going so far as to let the librarian coordinate and supervise independent study courses. This whole field is opening rapidly and it would be advantageous for any librarian to begin developing contacts with local colleges to plan a cooperative program.

Consumer and survival education - is another natural for

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libraries to undertake. A short course on available welfare services, financing a car, repairing woodwork, dressmaking or home canning would all be in high demand in most Indian communities. The library can offer the space and materials and the county extension agent or other social service personnel are usually willing to conduct the class. This type of program is useful in that it draws people into the library as well as provide basic information.

Paperback exchanges

Paperback exchanges are a popular method of encouraging the dissemination of information. Initially the library purchases a suitable quantity of paperbacks on subjects of interest to the community. In this situation, duplication of titles should be encouraged. Readers may then be asked to exchange on a one for one or two for one basis.

Media creation and use

Libraries serving Indian people are often in the unusual position of not being able to purchase materials on the information they need because it is not available or is not in a medium or language useful to the local population. In this case, it is worthwhile for the library to consider producing its own.

If the community lacks a newspaper, write and distribute a regular newsletter. It needn't be fancy. A two page sheet is adequate. But it should be published often and regularly. It should be distributed broadly. It should be oriented to providing basic survival information and notices for local residents.

A radio or T.V. show is another natural for a library. Radio and T.V. stations are required to provide a certain amount of public service time. The library should seek this time and produce or coordinate the shows. Like a newsletter, a show should concern itself with providing vital local information. One advantage is that either radio or television can be bilingual.

Video and audio tape

Video and audio tape have opened a whole new vista in local media creation. Local people can now produce their own materials in their own style and language. Although cost is a factor, it is essential for information delivery in areas where English literacy is low. Oral history, recording of important events and high interest local topics in the local language are all possible using this equipment.

III. SERVICE COMPONENTS OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

Many of the service components listed above may be conducted in or out of the library with equal facility. Services listed below are primarily intended to take place outside of the library.

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Home visits are a very effective way to introduce people to the library and make them feel welcome to use it. Visits should be made by local community residents only. They should have some print or visual information on the library and its services to leave behind. If any request for information or material is made, it should be answered immediately in order to build confidence.

Bookmobiles can be effective in large or dispersed communities. If at all possible, they should have regularly scheduled stops. In order to be effective, they should visit each stop at least every two weeks. If useful to the local community, they should be equipped for recording and playback of audio and video as well as be able to show slides and movies. Logical stops are at tribal housing sites, trading posts, PHS, schools, old age homes, and government buildings. In addition to circulation they can also be used to conduct services such as reference, story hours, etc. Old school buses can be successfully converted to bookmobiles at low cost. Bookmobiles are not recommended for small or concentrated populations because they are expensive to purchase, operate, and maintain.

Deposit collections are useful in churches, PHS, old age homes, government buildings, bars, and community centers. They may be stocked with magazines and paperbacks and used on an honor basis. They are relatively inexpensive and give people an opportunity to see the informational services that a library can provide.

IV. FURTHER READING

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National Indian Education Association
Library Service Guides

0. Guide to Funding Sources for American Indian Library and Information Services.
1. Working with Indian Communities and Agencies to Establish Indian Library Services.
2. Working with Library Agencies to Establish Indian Library Services.
3. Initial Organization and Staffing Patterns for Indian Library Services.
4. Alternatives to Standard Classification and Cataloging for Indian Libraries.
5. Urban Indian Library Services.
6. Adult [illegible]cation and Indian Libraries.
7. Promoting Indian Library Use.
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9. Assessing Information Needs in the Indian Community.
10. Materials Selection for Indian Libraries.
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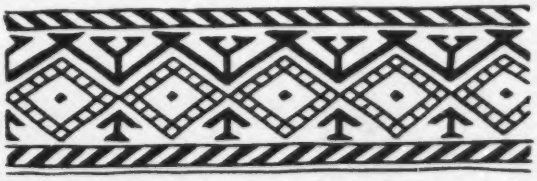

Appalachian Adult Education Center
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Selected Titles

Using Pamphlets with Disadvantaged Adults.

The Recruitment of Disadvantaged Adults: Effective Publicity.

Techniques for Teachers: Teaching the Application of Basic Skills to Everyday Life Problems.

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ABE - What Is It?

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